

Out of Programme

Approval Policy Document

*November 2016
Updated November 2017*

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Wales Deanery recognises that there are a number of reasons where a trainee wishes to take a period of time Out of Programme (OOP). Requests for out of programme (OOP) relate to obtaining clinical training (OOPT), clinical experience (OOPE), research in a different setting (OOPR) or a career break (OOPC).
- 1.2 This protocol does not supersede those arrangements set out in the current version of the Gold Guide but adds further clarity and support for those wishing to undertake time Out of Programme (OOP) and deals with the strict requirements for application and approval.
- 1.3 These requirements must be adhered to and failure to follow the processes and timescales set within this document are likely to result in a request for OOP being rejected. Therefore, those wishing to undertake a period OOP are advised to thoroughly read this document and if there are any specific queries relating to the proposed OOP contact their Deanery Specialty School Manager.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Trainees may only go Out of Programme (OOP) with the prior written agreement of the Wales Postgraduate Dean.
- 2.2 Applications to go OOP must be made by the Wales Deanery Application Form <https://www.walesdeanery.org/specialty-training/out-programme> and follow the process documented on the relevant Wales Deanery website.
- 2.3 Time out of programme will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for at least one year of training and will not normally be allowed in the final year of training other than in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.4 Occasions where OOP is granted to core trainees are likely to be exceptional given the short length and nature of their training.
- 2.5 Those wishing to apply for and undertake a period OOP are required to be in possession of a current satisfactory ARCP outcome. Trainees whose progress is deemed unsatisfactory or with unmet objectives identified at their ARCP will not normally be granted a period of out of programme. In some instances possession of a current satisfactory ARCP outcome may not be feasible. For example, a doctor in postgraduate training may have mitigating factors that have prevented satisfactory progression through their current training period. In such circumstances where a doctor is requesting an OOPC in relation to their personal circumstance, the requirement to hold a current ARCP outcome 1 may be waived at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean. Instead, suitable evidence to substantiate current personal circumstance will normally be required.
- 2.6 Doctors in training will retain their National Training Number (NTN) for the duration of the OOP, unless the Certificate of completion of Training (CCT) date falls within this time.
- 2.7 Before requesting OOPT or OOPR the approval of the appropriate Royal College/Faculty is required. The College/Faculty will indicate the length of time the OOPT/R will count towards to the CCT.

2.8 The General Medical Council (GMC) is the only body that can educationally approve OOPR/T to count towards a trainee's CCT. The Wales Deanery must submit a prospective approval request to the GMC for any OOP that is to count towards training on behalf of the trainee. If prospective approval is not sought or granted the OOP cannot count towards training. Retrospective approval will not be issued.

3. PROCESS

3.1 Prior to making an application trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor and their Training Programme Director. This discussion will determine the suitability of the proposed OOP and ensure that the proposed post will meet the educational needs of the trainee. It is recommended that this discussion takes place at least six months in advance of the OOP start date.

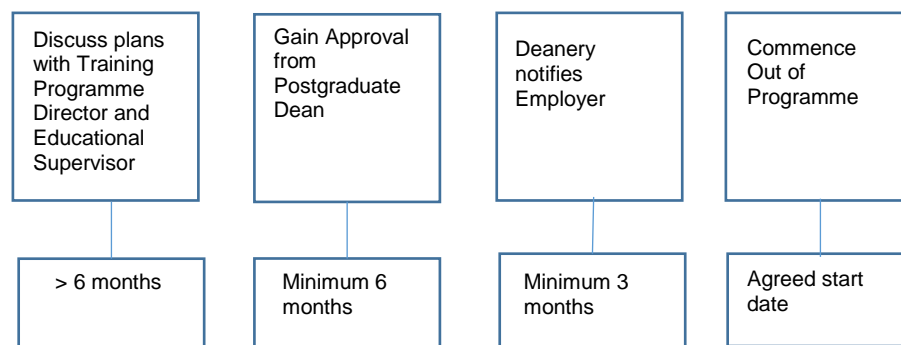
3.2 There are set timescales that must be adhered to when making a request to undertake a period OOP. These timescales are in place to ensure there is a sufficient period of time for requests to be considered and where required provide more information. Consideration will also be made to the impact on the wider training programme, ensure contractual notice periods are met and that appropriate backfill arrangements are in place, and to safeguard against any potential detrimental impact on patient safety.

3.3 If the number of trainees planning to go out of programme potentially weakens either the adequacy of the education programme or compromises patient-facing services, or where an "over subscription" of eligible OOP requests consideration will be given to prioritising requests. This may include discussion with individuals regarding flexibility over dates or giving priority to exceptional personal issues (OOPC) on compassionate grounds. However, the threshold for this will be dependent on the specialty, programme and deanery arrangements.

3.4 Timescales are as follows (also see figure 1):

- The application form is submitted to the Postgraduate Dean a minimum of six months in advance of the intended commencement date of the OOP
- If approved by the Postgraduate Dean, a minimum of three months' notice is provided to the current employer

Figure 1 illustrates the key time bound milestones when making an OOP request.



3.5 Those wishing to make an OOP application must be aware of these timescales and factor these in when planning a period Out of Programme. Failure to meet these timescales is likely to result

in an application being rejected. Those with concerns regarding the ability to meet these timescales should contact their Deanery Specialty School Manager to discuss at the earliest opportunity.

- 3.6 When requesting OOP, doctors in postgraduate training should be cognisant of the date they wish to commence in relation to their current contractual obligations and the rotation date of the wider programme, with as much alignment as possible. If necessary, the Postgraduate Dean may approve eligible applications with the caveat of an amended start date to ensure compliance with programme commitments.
- 3.7 In some exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Dean may exercise discretion with regard to the timing of submitting a request for approval, but only where there are reasonable extenuating circumstances. For example, those wishing to undertake an OOPC due to an unforeseen personal or health related matter. The timing of a research grant being awarded will not normally equate to an exceptional circumstance.

4. ARCP AND REVALIDATION

- 4.1 Doctors in training on OOP will still be required to engage in the annual ARCP process.
- 4.2 The ARCP panel will review documentation submitted by the trainee detailing what they have been doing during this OOP time if it is NOT recognised for training:
- OOPE – annual OOP report
 - OOPR – a research supervisors report and OOP report. If the OOPR is to count towards training then formal assessment documentation must be submitted.
- 4.3 An ARCP Outcome 8 will be awarded from trainees who:
- Are undertaking an OOPE to gain clinical experience that will not count towards the training programme required competences
 - Are undertaking an OOPR (unless prospective approval has been approved and that the OOPR will contribute towards the trainee's competences and CCT).
 - OOPC career break.
- 4.3 Where the trainee is on a prospectively approved OOPT/OOPR which is counting towards their training time a routine assessment of the trainees progression should be made and an ARCP outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 awarded.
- 4.5 Doctors in training should ensure that whilst they are OOP they continue to meet all of the requirements of the revalidation process i.e. they regular engage with their TPD, submit information as required for the ARCP, complete the Form R.

5 RETURN TO THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 5.1 Trainees need to liaise with their Training Programme prior to their return to discuss their next rotation placement.
- 5.2 All doctors in training returning from an OOP should have a return to practice programme planned for them which may include a phased return to clinical practice.

6 EXTENSION TO EXISTING OOP APPLICATION

6.1 Extending time out of programme relates to trainees who are currently on a previously agreed OOP. Trainees may wish to apply for an extension to their previously agreed OOP and must submit the appropriate documentation at least 6 months prior to their original planned end date.

6.2 The following documentation will be required by the Wales Deanery.

- Extension to OOP form signed by Training Programme Director and Educational Supervisor.
- Educational Supervisor Report from OOP Educational Supervisor.
- Statement detailing reasons for requesting an extension.

7 ACTING UP AS A CONSULTANT (AUC)

7.1 Trainees may Act Up as a Consultant (AUC) in their final year of training if permitted in their relevant Specialty Curriculum. Where the AUC is in the same training programme e.g. within Wales then prospective approval is not needed from the GMC. However, if it is in a different training programme the usual Out of Programme process applies and trainees should complete the Deanery OOP form in this instance.

8 EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND CONTINUOUS SERVICE

8.1 Trainees are advised to seek clarification from their employer about whether time OOP will impact upon their:

- Continuous employment
- Incremental progression
- Maternity leave entitlement
- Employer's contribution to superannuation
- Any other employment issue.